

***Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks***

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DECISION NOTICE FOR: Hollecker Lake Walleye Wild Fish Transfer**DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION**

Hollecker Lake is a popular family fishery for the community of Glendive. Unfortunately, the waterbody chronically becomes inhabited with undesirable species (e.g. Black Bullhead, Common Carp, River Carpsucker, Shorthead Redhorse, White Sucker) likely via poorly screened irrigation water and illegal transfers. In the winter of 2019, the local Walleyes Unlimited club, under approval from Dawson County, led an effort to drain Hollecker Lake to rid the unwanted species and provide a fresh start to the fishery. The lake was refilled in the spring of 2020. The club, along with guidance from FWP fisheries staff, decided on a restocking composition comprised of Rainbow Trout, Yellow Perch, Black Crappie, White Crappie, Channel Catfish, and Walleye. All these species except Walleye had previously been stocked or transferred into Hollecker Lake. A one-time stocking of catchable Rainbow Trout was completed in the spring of 2020. Wild fish transfers of Yellow Perch, Channel Catfish, Black Crappie, and White Crappie were also completed in the spring of 2020. Walleye have not previously been stocked or transferred into Hollecker Lake, thus the impetus for Environmental Assessment (EA). We are proposing a wild fish transfer of 100-200 adult Walleye from the Yellowstone River downstream of Intake Dam to Hollecker Lake. Walleye would be captured via electrofishing in the spring and/or fall of 2021. While the transfer is expected to have little to no population-level effect on the Yellowstone River, it is expected to provide immediate opportunity for anglers at Hollecker Lake.

PUBLIC PROCESS AND COMMENT

An EA was sent to interested parties as well as posted on the Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks webpage. Public notices also ran twice each in *The Independent Record* (Helena) and the *Glendive Ranger-Review* newspapers. Public comments were accepted on the EA from March 9 to April 8, 2021. A total of five comments were submitted (Table 1) and all were in support of the proposed action as planned. Comments could generally be summarized by the following themes:

- 1- The proposed action would provide young anglers opportunity.
- 2- The proposed action would be good for the community.
- 3- The proposed action would help control prey species.

Table 1: Public comments received regarding the Hollecker Lake walleye transfer EA.

Comment
<p>The Walleyes Unlimited Glendive Chapter board members have reviewed the EA for stocking Walleye in Hollecker lake and are exited to support the effort. This would be a great addition to our local fishery and give local folks an opportunity to catch mature walleyes close to town. We are hoping the walleye will also serve as a predator species to keep the unwanted fish deposited in the lake to a minimum. All of our board members agreed this is a good project and would like to see it continue in the future. Please let us know if there's anything we can do to help.</p>
<p>I think putting wild catchable Walleye in Hollecker would be a great boost for the lake!</p> <p>With the upgrades that have been made at Hollecker by local businesses, individuals, WUM, FWP and the West Glendive Public Works Dept. usage has probably at least quadrupled in the last year, which is fantastic to see. To add Walleye would further the great fishing experience that our young people can have at Hollecker without traveling a 100 miles to catch Walleye.</p> <p>Walleye will help control unwanted species that the screen system misses and make for a much healthier and productive lake. This is a win for all and thank you for the opportunity to comment on this great proposal!</p>
<p>This is a good idea for this community pond.</p>
<p>just a quick note supporting this project. Hollecker Lake is a great place for introducing kids to fishing and provides safe convenient access to fishing for the public that can't get on the River or make it to places further away like Ft Peck. Having some catchable Walleye stocked by the time the local Walleyes Unlimited Chapter has their kids fishing days would really enhance the opportunity to catch a nice fish for the kids and keep enthusiasm for this long standing program. With most of the Walleye below the Intake region of the River likely originating from Lake Sakawea, I see limited impact from this transfer to our local Yellowstone fishery. I appreciate the FWP considering this project for the benefit of our Community and look forward to taking my grandkids and nephew fishing there this summer.</p>
<p>I am in favor of introducing walleye into Hollicker, more opportunities for kids to catch fish is a bonus in my opinion. It will make it more of a diverse place to go and fish. Not knowing what you could catch.</p>

DECISION

Based on the analysis in the Environmental Assessment (EA), public comments received, and the applicable laws, regulations and policies, I have determined that this action will not have a significant effect on the natural or human environment. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared.

It is my decision to implement the proposed action and proceed with the work identified. By notification of this Decision Notice, the draft EA is hereby made the final EA without any modifications or additions. The final EA may be viewed online at <https://fwp.mt.gov/news/public-notices> or may be obtained from Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Region 7 Headquarters. Please direct any further requests or questions to Brad Schmitz, Region 7 Supervisor, or Mike Backes, Region 7 Fisheries Manager.


Regional Supervisor

4/28/2021

Date